EXHIBIT OF LACES TO AID AGED BELGIAN LACEMAKERS

Home and workshop of an aged lacemaker of Bruges.

Aged Belgian woman at Nazareth, in Flanders, making valenciennes lace.

Group of lacemakers at Beguegnage, Belgium.

BY special arrangement with B. Altman & Co. the officials of the Commission for Relief in Belgium at 71 Broadway will have on exhibition and sale, commencing to-morrow and continuing for one week, a rare assortment of Belgian war laces which were brought to this country by the commission to be sold for the benefit of the needy people in Belgium.

Until the outbreak of the great European conflict Belgium was the world's centre of the lace manufacturing industry and Americans were the largest purchasers of Belgian laces. In times of peace and prosperity the little kingdom manufactured and sold about twelve million francs worth of lace annually, of which one-fourth of the entire product was sent to the United States, a greater proportion than was taken by any other nation.

After the beginning of the war, as a matter of course, the lace industry in Belgium came to an abrupt end, and the 40,000 workers—all women and girls—were in enforced idleness. Many of these 40,000 were familiar with no other kind of work, having been brought up in it from childhood, and it was to aid as much as possible this class of people, by giving them partial employment, that the commission undertook a rather difficult mission of selling a part at least of their product.

The filmy laces are made wholly of the finest thread of the finest textures known. In some instances silk is also used to interweave with the linen. Intricate patterns are followed successfully only after an apprenticeship of many years. The designs are made by skilled artists and individual pieces are made by carefully laying out the design on white cloth on which the pattern is shown. In following these patterns the greatest care is necessary. Tiny bobbins, pins, needles and shuttles are used, and the stitches are interwoven with infinite pains.

Possibly in no instance is a design comprising several yards of lace, or even a single yard, made by one worker. The geometrical accuracy in which the patterns are worked make it possible for any number of lacemakers to be engaged upon a single piece or pattern. The work of the various lacemakers is then put together by expert stitching so perfectly that no one can trace the jointures.

In the consignment of lace received by the Commission for Relief in Belgium, and which will be sold at the store of B. Altman & Co., there is a wonderful variety, including many of the old laces that are rare and cannot be duplicated by modern makers. There are also a great many beautiful pieces that have been completed since the beginning of the war. These special "war laces" are of a very fine texture and quality. It is said that some of the most beautiful pieces are the work of women of four score years of age. Strange as it may seem, perfect or acute vision of the eye is not wholly essential to those who have had long years of experience in the work, and even totally blind women have been known to turn out most beautiful specimens. Some of these appear in the collection to be exhibited at the Altman store.

It is impossible to describe the beauties of all these pieces, for the laces represent more than $200,000 in value, but there are some striking pieces that are certainly worthy of a description. For instance, there is an exquisite old Droochel wedding veil. It was made for an aristocratic Belgian family—it is even said that it is a family of high nobility. This veil was made especially for one of the grand dames of this Brussels family in 1800, and has been worn by every bride in the family for more than a century.

The centre of the veil is of the finest net and the edges and corners hold delicate designs sparingly arranged to get the full beauty contrast of filmy net and close lace work. There is a long story threaded in the mesh of this veil. One would expect it to be yellowed with age, but it just shows a tinge of creamy tint. This indicates that it was not laid away in state, but was honored again and again as numerous daughters and granddaughters draped it about them on their bridal day.

Pieces of old lace, less enchanting, less delicately embodying purpose in the design, are framed in state in public buildings. For the sake of the Belgian daughters whose most prized heirloom this veil was, those who are representing the distressed ones in Belgium are in hopes that this piece will eventually be purchased and placed on permanent exhibition in one of the great museums of the United States. Its value is $3,500.

Another rare piece of lace, which dates back to 1650, is a flounce of "Old Flandre" of the Louis XIV. period. It is a most beautiful specimen and was evidently intended to be used as a valance for a high poster bedstead. Its value is $5,600. A narrow strip of flounce in the same design and intended to be an adjunct of the valance is valued at $500.

Of course not all of these pieces are of extremely high values. One may buy a little wisp of a handkerchief with a dainty Bruges lace edge for $2.50, or one may pay as much as $125 for a square of linen with a Mechlin edge as fine as any cobweb. There are specimens of Flandre, Rosaline, Mechlin, Venetian point, Droochel, Duchesse, Bruges, Point de Paris and the more familiar Cluny, Torchon and Valenciennes.

Each piece is marked with the number of the maker. Some of them are narrow and some are twenty to thirty inches wide. There are squares of filet, baby caps of Bruges, collars of Venetian point, scarfs of gorgeous embroidery with filmy inserts. There are lace tablecloths, started long before the war began; bedspreads made with heavy linen thread, quaint lace kerchiefs and lace fans, such as one associates with court ladies.

As one lacemaker as a rule can make but one design it is evident that where there are two or three kinds of lace in one piece it must have travelled from place to place; perhaps a flower came from one village; some rich embroidered corner from another village, while still another worker furnished the beautiful fauns and fairies in the centre. It may happen, indeed it is more than likely, that the workers on this one piece were white haired old women. The fine work comes from their experienced hands, even though their eyesight is all but gone and their hands tremble with the palsy of age. The one design—their family figure—has grown to be a part of them.

There are thirty kinds of lace in this wonderful collection of "war laces." In these thirty kinds some tell of births and deaths, and more romances and tragedies have been woven than one could imagine.

It is said by authority of the officials of the commission for relief in Belgium that these laces will be sold at extremely low prices, but a trifle, in fact, above the cost of production. The commission will be satisfied if it is able to send to the practically destitute lace workers enough money to pay them for their labor and material. As the wages of the lace workers of Belgium are very small the amount which will be doled out to each of the operatives will necessarily be proportionally meagre. Altman & Co. will undertake to show the laces to the best advantage, and the purchasers will have the assurance in years to come that they have acquired something that may be transmitted from generation to generation in their families as heirlooms and as mementos of the great war which is now devastating nearly all of Europe.

WHAT SHOULD A MAN SPEND A YEAR ON HIS WARDROBE?

"THEY'VE been talking about prosperity for the past six months," said the dapper little man as he sat down in the smoking compartment and lighted a cigarette, "but the first sign I've seen of it came along to-day, the first sign for about two years."

For a few moments the night express roared along through the darkness and then a big passenger sitting opposite spoke. He was tall, as well as heavy, and wore a checked suit and had a sharp nose, a bulldog jaw and blue eyes of the gimlet quality.

"What's your line?" he asked.

"Haberdashery, neckwear, underwear, shirts a specialty," the little chap rattled off, so fast that some of his words ran together. "To be sure, times ain't normal yet, and most of our customers are still scraping along with woollen underwear at $5 or $6 a garment instead of paying about $18 a suit, as they usually do. But orders have started in on this cheap line, and perhaps we'll be selling silk goods before long."

The big passenger gazed at the other in silence. Finally he said:

"Looky here, friend, what do you charge for silk underwear?"

"Oh, anywhere from $65 to $100 a suit. Sell more at $80 than any other price, I guess."

"F-friend," said the big man with increasing doubt, "do you mean to tell me that any full grown citizen of these United States actually pays such prices?"

"Why, sure they do!" the salesman rejoined with an amused smile. "That isn't considered extravagant, or it wasn't until the last year or two, when people got to imagining they were on the toboggan toward the poorhouse. I suppose, f'r instance, you'd consider $1,000 a year a good deal for a man to spend on clothes—on clothes for himself, I mean?"

"I certainly would!" the big man rejoined with emphasis.

"Well, it isn't," the salesman continued. "Lots of men spend all the way from $1,000 up to $3,000 a year. Why, I know a man in a one horse town in New Jersey who pays his tailor a salary of $1,200 a year just to keep him in suits and waistcoats, extra trousers and overcoats. Doesn't specify any number of clothes either. All he does is to send the tailor a check for $100 the first of each month and it's the tailor's job to do all the rest.

"And I know another man—Chicago man he is—who's very fond of running over to the other side every spring. Last time he chartered a big steam yacht. He was gone four months, and all that time he never had any laundry done. You can imagine how many clothes of all kinds that fellow had on hand.

"There's another man, customer of mine, too, who came on from the middle West a while ago to take charge of the New York office of his concern, and he has seventy-eight suits of clothes, and all of them in use at the same time."

"Young man," said the big passenger in severe tones, "how can any single human being keep seventy-eight suits of clothes in use?"

He glared at the salesman; evidently he wasn't accustomed to being hoaxed. But the dapper little travelling man talked right along, and with evident sincerity.

"How can he do it? That's easy. This gentleman has a country house, a yacht, a town house in Fifth avenue, a camp in Maine and belongs to a riding club. You can guess what he has at his country place—three or four knockabout suits, a couple of dinner suits and two for full dress, several for riding, others for motoring, half a dozen changes for tennis and golf, and a few business suits just for ordinary morning wear.

"On his yacht there are at least eight suits I know of—two full uniforms, a dinner suit, a full evening suit, a cutaway with several extra pairs of trousers and two or three business suits. He keeps three or four full changes of clothes at his riding club, and at his camp he has all sorts of outfits for all sorts of weather, not only for himself but extra clothes for guests who sometimes go there and are not prepared for the rough work of fishing and hunting in season.

"The rest of his wardrobe he has at his town house, and a little thought may show you the extent and variety for all occasions, summer, winter, spring and fall, not to mention the suits and overcoats needed for an occasional trip to Florida, southern California, Bermuda or to the ice carnival at Montreal."

"But even all that can't account for seventy-eight suits," the fat passenger insisted.

"Of course not," the salesman replied promptly, "but you forget that fully one-third of the clothes are all the time in the hands of this gentleman's valet, or of a tailor being pressed, repaired, freshened up. And let me tell you another thing; these clothes, including overcoats, shoes, hats, gloves, underwear, shirts, neckwear, collars and handkerchiefs, represent an investment of probably $10,000 or $12,000 in cold cash.

"Huh!" the big man ejaculated, "and what's that sign of prosperity you said you saw to-day for the first time in a couple of years?"

"It was in Buffalo," the other answered. "Got in last evening, had all my samples ready in a private parlor at the hotel by midnight, and soon after 10 this morning my customers commenced to drop in—of course, I'd notified 'em in advance when I would be there. Well, about noon, one of my best patrons showed up; looked fine, too, cheerful as a terrier scratching at a rat hole. I'd heard a month ago that he'd got into the market right on war stocks, and I guess that's true, for he did order like it was in the old days when everybody was making money."

"How much did his order amount to?" asked the big man, growing more and more interested.

"Seventeen hundred, exactly. Of course, that'd last him quite a while; pretty nearly a year, perhaps, for $1,700 will buy a lot of underwear and shirts. First thing he did was to pick out a dozen silk shirts at $15 each and half a dozen silk shirts with stiff bosoms for full dress at $17 each. Then he wanted six shirts to go with his dinner coat, silk bodies with pleated bosoms and cuffs, and these ran about $18 apiece, for the bosoms were pretty fine.

"Of course he had to have a dozen fine linen shirts with pleated bosoms to wear with a cutaway, but these didn't amount to much—only $8 a shirt. While he was about it he added six outing shirts of fine cotton cloth, soft and heavy, for golf and tennis, at $36 for the lot, and six heavy flannel shirts for hunting and fishing which cost $54 for the half dozen. Of course there were a lot of other kinds of shirts that this Buffalo gentleman could have ordered, but he didn't because he doesn't believe in spending money needlessly."

"Evidently not," the big passenger grunted.

For a few moments the night express roared on its way, while the passengers in the smoking compartment kept silent. At last the big man bit the end off a fresh stogie and lighted it. Then said he:

"What do you suppose this Buffalo customer of yours pays for his other clothes—shoes, f'r instance?"

"I don't presume to be in my client's full confidence," the salesman answered, "but in a general way I sh'd say his shoes cost from $15 to $25 a pair—and of course it's nothing for a man to have from a dozen to two dozen pair in use at the same time."

"And how about suits and hats and overcoats and such duds?" the big man continued—he seemed to be deeply interested.

"Well," said the haberdasher judicially, "this gentleman pays his tailor anywhere from $85 for a business suit up to $125 or $130 for a full dress suit. His hats are a small item—few men invest more than $100 a year in hats—and the glove bill is small. In my opinion a man who puts more than $40 or $50 a year in gloves alone, he's really extravagant.

"But, bless you, sir, a gentleman who spends $2,000 or $3,000 a year for his own clothes shouldn't excite comment, when we remember that a fashionable lady of his class spends as much as $3,000 on a single evening costume, and has eight or ten of them in a single season."

JOHN BARRETT ON TRADE CHANCES IN SANTO DOMINGO

THERE is undeniably a new era dawning in the islands of the Caribbean, the American Mediterranean. This is due to the fact that the American producer and the American capitalist are preparing to make use of advantages that have long been overlooked. German commerce made great progress in the West Indies during the last decade, but the war has brought the trade ambitions of the German nation to a temporary halt.

This situation makes it easier for the American manufacturer to enter the field and secure such a control as to have the bulk of the trade in the West Indies and many of the South American republics almost exclusively. The Germans thus far have shown greater insight and more skill than Americans in conquering the trade of the West Indies, and equally effective methods must be applied by Americans.

It is the opinion of those who have studied trade in the tropics that the chief things needed to extend American trade in this quarter are better shipping facilities in South America and more advantageous credits—longer terms than are usually allowed by American houses. Then Americans have not given enough study to the field and the needs of the Latin republics.

John Barrett, Director-General of the Pan American Union, discussing this general question, said the attention of the American producer is now centred upon South America. He declared that the union is receiving more requests for information than at any time in its history. He predicted that the trade relations between the United States and South America would be greatly improved in the next few years. Speaking about the situation in Santo Domingo he said:

"The Dominican Republic is very closely bound commercially to the United States. This perhaps may be not very well known to the American people in general, yet the United States under normal conditions and prior to the European war furnished more than 60 per cent. of the total imports of the Dominican Republic and took nearly as a great a proportion of its exports.

"No other country in the world sold to the Dominicans or bought from them more than about one-third as much as did the United States. Since the beginning of the European war in August, 1914, Germany, the second country in rank to the United States, has fallen out of the field. Other European countries have also lost, and the United States has gained proportionately.

"It might be supposed that this trade ascendency has been acquired as the result of some extraordinary energy or enterprise on the part of American manufacturers, and it would be somewhat flattering to our American vanity to believe this. In reality, however, it was due more to the energy and enterprise of the Dominicans than to us, or perhaps after all it was the result of proximity and circumstance most of all.

"Proximity and being on the ocean lane of travel account for the, on the whole, good transportation service between the Dominican Republic and the United States. This transportation serivce naturally brings the Dominicans in large numbers to the United States. They come for business, for pleasure and for educational reasons. Whereas in Argentina ten persons visit Europe to one that visits the United States, in the Dominican Republic it is reversed and ten come here to one that goes to Europe.

"In this way American goods came to be introduced into the Dominican Republic. The Dominicans came for them and ordered them by mail. All our merchants had to do was to fill the orders. It was an easily acquired trade, for the purchaser sought the seller. Recently there has been some effort to develop this trade, but not commensurate with its importance. Nevertheless this is a trade well worth having and this a country well worth the knowing.

"It forms the eastern end of one of the most beautiful and fertile islands in the world, and, unlike some parts of the western end of the same island and adjacent island of Porto Rico, it is not overpopulated. In fact it is much underpopulated, so that there are great areas of undeveloped but highly productive lands. There are forests of timber which have never known the woodman's axe; in fact everywhere there is something to do, some opening for enterprise which ought not longer to be neglected.

"The one thing that astonishes a visitor from the United States to the Dominican Republic more than another is that notwithstanding the commanding position the United States occupies in relation to Dominican trade, there has been so little development due to American capital and enterprise. It is only when he understands that the American trade in the Dominican Republic is due almost entirely to Dominican initiative that he begins to perceive the true situation and to appreciate why the opportunities which bristle on all sides have been so much neglected by Americans.

"In brief, the truth is that the Dominicans know the United States very well and would welcome American capital and enterprise, but the American does not know the Dominican Republic very well. The American salesman is seldom seen in the island and many classes of goods which would receive a ready acceptance are not even known to the people of the Dominican Republic, or are not known as of American manufacture.

"Perhaps it would be no exaggeration to say that an intelligent selling campaign on the part of some live or more exporting firms might easily increase the imports from the United States from a normal figure (between $5,000,000 and $6,000,000 to $10,000,000 in one or two years at the most. It is quite possible that this increase might be brought about in a single year.

"In many of the Latin American countries it is necessary for the exporter from the United States to consider many factors which complicate the problem of whether or not American goods can be sold in that particular country. Transportation, banking facilities, proximity or remoteness and already opposing established lines of trade, are some of these factors.

"Few of these problems touch the Dominican Republic. The situation is all with the United States. Commercially the Dominican Republic may be looked on something as we look on Canada, as a field for trade almost if not quite identical with the domestic field.

"In Hayti the products grown are almost the same as in Santo Domingo and there the opportunities for trade will be as good for Americans as in the other end of the island, occupied by Santo Domingo. The chief exports of Hayti are coffee, logwood and hides and skins, cocoa, lignum vitæ, cotton, orange peel and guaiac wood. The exports in 1913 amounted to $11,315,559 and the imports reached $8,100,125."

PLAN FOR WORLD PEACE AND CHURCH UNION

SIXTY millions of Protestants were looking forward when the war broke out to celebrations of the 400th anniversary of the beginning of the Protestant Reformation and of the 300th anniversary of the landing of the Pilgrims in America. Now American Protestants, twenty-five millions in number, are to be asked to employ these anniversaries to make wars in future impossible. Immediately following the close of the great war, it is declared, opportunities such as the world never saw before will open for a movement of this kind.

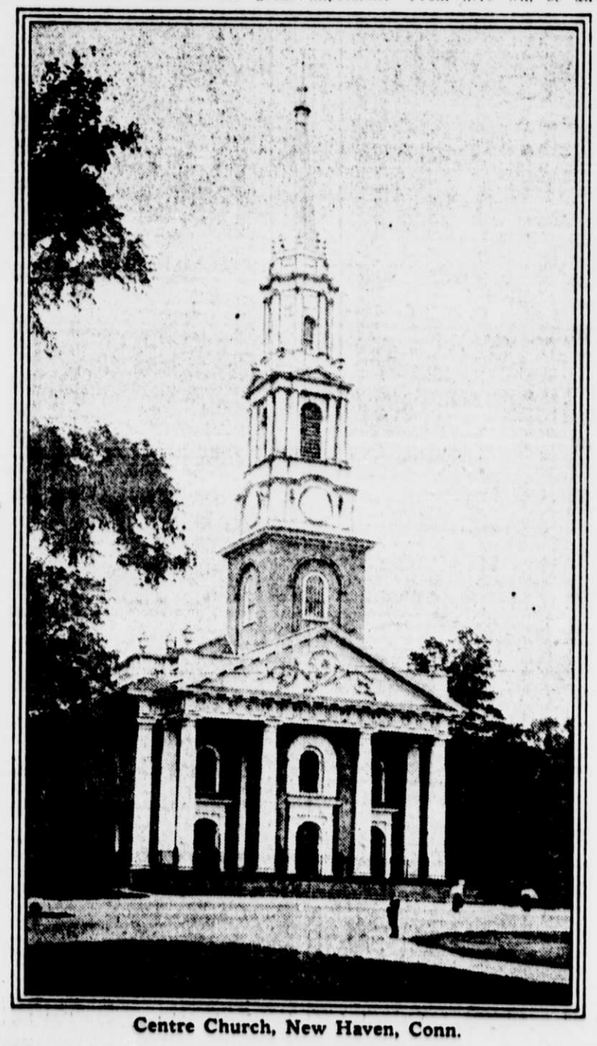
Already Lutherans of the United States have sent word to the Lutherans of Germany, of Denmark and of Sweden that America is ready to co-operate with Lutherans of the whole world in making the anniversary of the nailing of the protests on the Castle Church at Wittenberg a demonstration in favor of permanent world peace. The European countries named are ready to celebrate the anniversary in 1917 if war conditions make it possible.

The National Council of Congregationalists in New Haven has for one of its chief duties to determine what form the celebration of 1920 shall take. Discussion of the question is going on in many quarters. Presbyterians and Baptists are vitally interested and will take part. But apart from all other forms the council at New Haven will, it is believed, put at the top of the 1920 programme the work of Protestants for freedom from wars forever. It is expected that an appeal will be sent to the Christians of the whole world bidding them prepare for hard work the moment that fighting stops. In the Lutheran and Pilgrim anniversaries are bound up the Lutheran bodies of the world, with their almost thirty millions, the Congregationalists, the Baptists and some smaller Protestant bodies, with their twenty millions.

Then the Protestant world is to celebrate this coming year the 100th anniversary of the founding of the American Bible Society, and Protestants of North America are to meet Protestants of South America in a Panama conference to be held in February. In addition, at Garden City, in January, there is to be a conference of Christians of North America to consider steps toward church union. Here if possible the Roman and Eastern Catholic Christians will be brought in, and it is known that the great bodies of Anglicans and Methodists will be represented. It will not consider church union itself, so much as it will methods by which North America can invite all Christian denominations to have part in a union movement, but it is known that it will speak for Christians of the New World in plans for world peace.

It is regarded as fitting that in Centre Church, New Haven, will be mapped out the initial plans for an American celebration of the anniversary of the landing of the Pilgrims.

The council that meets in Centre Church is the first of the great meetings to have a chance not alone to plan for a future anniversary, but also to speak its mind on peace since the beginning of the war. From this New Haven green will go forth a call to Christians to make wars in future impossible. From here will be announced the earliest suggestions about the 1920 celebration. And from here will also be given out the part that Congregationalists will take in the reformation celebration.



Centre Church, New Haven, Conn.

The same council will pass upon another matter of vital interest to America and of many parts of the mission field. Of late, as it ought to be known, Congregationalists have set up a centralized body which while it advises only, has about all of the binding force that religious legislative bodies possess. This is so at least in the extent that it is obeyed. There is proposed a rearrangement of congregational benevolences. These are of enormous influence upon the whole world, not America alone. They affect not only missions, but education in all forms. The plans favor greater efficiency, and affect the entire structure of administration of many workers and many millions of dollars.

Nobody needs to be told that it was in 1620 that the Pilgrims from England by the way of Holland landed at Plymouth, in Massachusetts Bay. Hardly anybody needs to be told either that their descendants have spread all over America and have influenced American thought and ways as almost no others have done. Now the question arises, what form shall the celebration of the three hundredth anniversary of that event take? There will be several forms suggested in Centre Church, but the two most talked of are an exposition and a big money offering.

The exposition if held will be at Plymouth, or between Boston and Plymouth, and it is proposed to make the buildings permanent. Thus made they can be used for exhibition purposes of many kinds, or occupied for industries. Companies of Boston citizens are talking of such a plan, with or without cooperation with churches. As for the money; of course that is for missionary purposes. The sum of $10,000,000 is suggested.

Protestants in general will join the Lutherans in observing the anniversary of the start of the Reformation. It was on October 31, 1517, that Martin Luther nailed ninety protests to the door of his church in Wittenberg. His act started the Reformation. Germans, Danes, Swedes and many others are interested in this anniversary of two years hence. Here in America the Lutherans urge, among other plans, big street parades. They hope that many cities will arrange such parades.

For its part in these anniversaries New York city is proposing a Christian union building. It is not yet beyond the tentative stage, any more than the Boston exposition or the street parades, but two conferences have been held to consider such an enterprise.